

WASHINGTON, D.C. - The health insurance reform legislation expected to receive a vote in the House of Representatives includes a range of benefits for older Americans, Congressman Sam Farr (D-Carmel) said on Friday, one of the many reasons he supports the bill.

"This reform bill focuses a lot of attention on providing secure and stable health coverage for our seniors," Rep. Farr said. "It accomplishes those goals by reducing costs, improving quality of care and giving seniors the peace of mind that Medicare will be around for years to come."

Among the benefits included in the legislation for seniors:

- Fully protects Medicare benefits and extends the solvency of the program for almost a decade by cutting waste, fraud, and abuse but never benefits.
- Closes the "donut hole" gap in prescription drug coverage to lower costs for seniors. Seniors who reach the gap in 2010 will receive a \$250 rebate. The gap will be fully closed by 2020.
- Improves coordination and quality of care.
- Expands home and community-based services to keep people in their homes instead of nursing homes.
- Stops the worst insurance company abuses like denying coverage due to pre-existing conditions.

"Medicare is one of the most important programs Washington has created, and I've been a strong supporter since I arrived in Washington," Rep. Farr said. "This reform legislation builds

on the strengths already included in Medicare while protecting these benefits by extending Medicare's solvency for years to come."

As soon as this bill goes into effect, seniors will start to see immediate relief from high prescription prices. Medicare beneficiaries who hit the "donut hole" (the gap in coverage where seniors have to shoulder the entire cost of prescription drugs) will receive a \$250 rebate right away to make life-saving drugs more affordable.

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